

# An Investigation of the Supportive Giving/Receiving Verbs (SGR Verbs) *tekureru/temorau* in the Narratives of Japanese Women Who Experienced Childbirth and Childcare: The Direct and Indirect Indexicality of the SGR Verbs

Takako Okamoto

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## 1. Introduction

In September 2007, the World Judo Championships were held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. One of the most famous Japanese Judo athletes Ryoko Tani, who had already won many gold medals, made a comeback after a two-year childcare leave, winning the gold medal again. While many Japanese female athletes retire after they have a baby, Tani came back to her battlefield with the famous phrase, *mama demo kin* (I will win the gold medal as a Japanese mommy). Tani said that she wanted to win again to prove that female athletes with children could play an active role in the sports world. When she uttered the famous phrase (i.e. *mama demo kin*), she came across as a very independent and atypical Japanese woman, who usually gives up their careers after marriage or childbirth. Right after the final bout, a reporter asked about the feelings of the winner during a live television broadcast. Tani expressed her gratitude toward her family, especially her husband, with tears in her eyes, and said the following (1):

- (1) *shujin ga renshuu sase tekureta kara . . .*  
husband NOM train CAU SGi because  
'Because my husband made me train (in Judo).'

As a native Japanese speaker, I find the phrase in (1) completely grammatical. On the other hand, her expression “*shujin ga renshuu sase tekureta* (my husband made me train (in Judo))” struck me as incongruous, being so humble that it was inconsistent with what she said previously. At the same time, her comment seemed exactly right in the context. This is because in this context her comment (1) represents her sincerity as both a respectful athlete and a respectful “mother”.

Tani’s comment provided me with a clue for analyzing my interview data from Japanese women who have experienced childbirth and childcare. I focused on the expression “*sasetekureru*” (to make me train) in Tani’s sentence because I found many similar expressions with the supportive giving verb *tekureru*, and expressions with *temorau*, a supportive receiving verb. In order to investigate the sociocultural functions of these grammatical forms in the narrative discourse of these Japanese women, I adopt the concept of indexicality, referring to Ochs (1990) and Hill (1995).

The goal of this study is to clarify the direct and indirect indexicality of the supportive giving-receiving verbs (SGR verbs) *tekureru* and *temorau* (cf. *yarimorai hyoogen*) in the narrative discourse of Japanese women who have experienced childbirth and childcare. As seen in previous studies and actual data, I found that SGR verbs directly index the agents’ beneficial contributions to the patients (i.e. the interviewee).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the indirect indexicality of these verbs expresses the persona with modest and servile characteristics of the interviewees. This modest persona is the ideal aspect of their characteristics in the *omote*, or public stage. The use of the SGR verbs by these women works to express themselves as modest and ideal wives and mothers in their narratives. Meanwhile, they also represent their servile persona for childcare and housework.

### 1.1. Direct and indirect Indexicality

The notion of indexicality argues that various levels of language practices (e.g. morphological, phonological, phrasal, and textual levels) figuratively indicate social identities and sociocultural norms. The present article adopts Ochs’s (1990) notion of indexicality as its theoretical base. Ochs considers indexicality to be how language indexes sociocultural informa-

tion (e.g. social status, roles, relationships, settings, actions, activities, genres, topics, affective and epistemological stances of participants) at the level of a particular communicative event. Depending on the different types of sociocultural information, indexicality is classified into two levels: direct and indirect. With these two types of indexicalities, Ochs argues that sociocultural categories, such as gender, social status, and roles, and speech activities are not directly indexed by linguistic forms, but indirectly indexed in given communicative contexts. In order to explain the concept of indexicality, Ochs considers the use of particular Japanese sentence-final particles such as *zo*, *ze*, and *wa*. What these particles index is interpreted as both an affective disposition and gender. Ochs understands that these particles literally index the affective disposition, while they figuratively index the gender of the speaker in a particular context. For instance, the sentence-final particles *zo* and *ze* directly index coarse intensity as the affective dispositions, and indirectly index the male “voice” as the gender of the speaker.

Referring to Ochs, Cook (1996) expresses the differences of indexicality as indexical signs that have core social meaning (cf. direct indexicality), and, through this, other social meanings that arise as situational inferences in a given context (cf. indirect indexicality). She observes the use of Japanese addressee honorifics (the *masu* form) and their non-honorific counterpart (the plain form) at home and in classroom interactions in elementary schools in Japan. Through the observation of classroom interactions in elementary schools and family interaction at home, Cook finds that the *masu* form directly indexes the disciplined mode of self, and the plain form the spontaneous mode of self. The fact that children consequently use the *masu* form to display the disciplined mode in various situations also clarifies that the indexical meanings of this form may be formality or social status.

The series of work on Mock Spanish by Hill (1993, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2005) demonstrates that the textual level of language practices also indexes the sociocultural information, such as hidden racism spread through the mass media and everyday discourse in U.S. society. Mock Spanish includes various levels of speech (e.g. loans, morphological tips, platitude) uttered by monolingual English speakers who are not of Latino descent. According

to Hill, Mock Spanish is employed to create humorous or insulting meaning not only in everyday talk but also in mass media and public and political discourse. Hill (2005: 114) claims that the direct indexicality of Mock Spanish is a “positive colloquial persona,” which includes dimensions such as an easygoing and relaxed attitude, a sense of humor, cosmopolitanism, and regional authenticity. People use Mock Spanish to express easy-going characteristics, jocularity and light-heartedness in their discourses. Meanwhile, Mock Spanish indirectly indexes negative racial stereotypes of Spanish speakers, such as lazy, dirty, unintelligent, sexually loose, and politically corrupt. This indirect indexicality of Mock Spanish produces and reproduces negative stereotypes of Spanish speaking people and pulls down the status of these people in the US society everyday.

### 1. 2. Japanese supportive giving verbs — *tekureru*, and *temorau*

Several verbs in Japanese correspond to the English verbs give and receive: the giving verbs include *sashiageru*, *ageru*, *yarū*, *kudasaru*, *kureru*; and the receiving verbs are *itadaku* and *morau* (Tsujimura 1996). These verbs are also used as supportive verbs, connecting to the preceding verbal gerund of verbs like the following examples (2a) and (2b).

- (2a) *Taro wa Hanako o tasuke-tekureta.*  
 Taro TOP Hanako ACC help SGi  
 ‘Taro helped Hanako.’

- (2b) *Hanako wa Taro ni tasuke-temoratta.*  
 Hanako TOP Taro by help SRe  
 ‘Hanako was helped by Taro.’

In these lists of SGR verbs, the forms *tekureru* for the supportive giving verb (Masuoka 2007) and *temorau* for the supportive receiving verb are used more frequently than the others. Because most of the SGR verbs in the narrative data included *tekureru*, *temorau*, and derived forms, the present study is concerned only with these forms.

There have been two main approaches to studying Japanese giving-receiving verbs in previous studies. One approach discusses how the speaker chooses the forms of supporting giving verbs (Oe 1975; Kuno 1978, 1987;

Ando 1986; Kamio 1990). Oe (1976) and Kuno (1978) focus on the choice of the forms, *teyaru* and *tekureru*, and argue that the choice depends on the location of the speaker's viewpoint in the sentence. Coming from a different cognitive viewpoint, Kamio (1990) defines the choice based on the notion of "speaker's territory of information" referring to the definition on giving verbs by Ando (1986).

The other approach, which is proximately concerned with indexicality, investigates what the supportive giving verb indicates (Oe 1975; Ide 2006; Masuoka 2007). Oe (1976) explains that the Japanese supportive giving verbs *yaru* and *kureru* and the supportive receiving verb *morau* figuratively indicate a beneficial deed (i.e. *onkeiteki-kooi*) to the patient by the agent. In addition, these supportive verbs subjectively represent the patient's appreciation and expectation toward the agent. The relation between the subjective characteristic and the use of supportive giving verbs is discussed in Masuoka (2007), who refers to the sentences that include SGR verbs as "beneficial constructions (i.e. *onkei-koobun*)." According to Masuoka, these constructions denote a beneficial delivery between the agent and the patient, indicating a favorable state for the patient. However, whether the contents declared in the beneficial construction are actually favorable or not for the patient is up to the subjective judgment of the speaker in a particular context. In this sense, Masuoka argues that the beneficial construction has a similar subjective feature to deixis, whose forms are determined based on the subjective judgment of the speaker in a particular context. Therefore, it is often argued that deixis indexically signals socio-cultural information depending on the contexts (Silverstein 1976). Along the same lines, the beneficial construction in Japanese, being similar to deixis in terms of grammaticality, should be one of Japanese indexes. Therefore, the supportive beneficial construction is one Japanese grammatical element that explicitly indexes the beneficial direction in human relationships (Ide 2006). The present analysis refers to the latter studies, which focus on the sociocultural functions of the SGR verbs.

## 2. Data: Narrative data in the interview speech event on childbirth experiences

The present study examines narratives in interview events by seventeen Japanese women who have experienced childbirth and childcare in Japan.<sup>2</sup> The detailed information on the research participants is in Appendix II. All of the interview events were recorded using digital audio recorders (i.e. iPod, and Zoom H4) with the consent of the interviewees. Parts of interviews were transcribed for this research by the researcher (i.e. one of the interviewees). The recordings were held in a place where the interviewees could talk frankly about themselves; the interviewees' living rooms, coffee shops, the interviewees' friends' living rooms, etc. The total recording duration of these interviews was about 11 hours 24 minutes.

Although we prepared several interview questions in advance (Appendix III), we encouraged the interviewees to speak freely as much as possible. First, we asked the interviewees to discuss their childbirth experiences in general. The interviewers then asked questions derived from the interviewees' comments. Therefore, the recording durations of each interview varies.

In addition, this study takes into account the utterances of the interviewers in analyzing the data (see data analysis below). This is because the interviewers' speech (e.g. the terms, and the contents) often affects the form and content of the interviewees' speech (Sakurai, 2002). Accounting for the interviewers' influence, the present study mainly analyzes the interviewees' speech.

## 3. Data Analysis

### 3.1. Direct indexicality of the SGR verbs in narratives on childbirth experiences

I found one hundred and seven expressions with *temorau* (a supportive giving verb) and *tekureru* (a supportive receiving verb) in the data. All participants (i.e. interviewers and interviewees) used either/both *tekureru* or/and *temorau* expressions. There were seventeen utterances with these expressions by the interviewers in the data. I did not analyze these utterances to clarify the indexicality of the SGR verbs by the interviewees.<sup>3</sup> In addition, two examples of the *temorau* expressions were not included in my

analysis because these expressions were uttered as in quotes, as someone else's voice. Therefore the present study analyzes eighty-eight examples of *tekureru*, and *temorau* expressions from the narratives on childbirth and childcare experiences. As described in previous studies, these verbs indicate a benefit toward the patient. I hypothesize that these supportive verbs directly index that the speaker as the patient of the sentence receives some "benefit from the agent." For instance, in my data, Nanako,<sup>4</sup> a twenty-nine-year-old woman who had her first child two years ago, says that her husband has done all the laundry since she gave birth to their first child (3):

- (3) *sentaku toka mo mameni imadani yat tekureru shi*  
do the laundry like also diligently still do SGi and  
'My husband has still diligently helped me to do the laundry, and . . .

Using the supportive giving verb *tekureru*, Nanako indicates that the subject (i.e. her husband) has provided benefit (i.e. doing the laundry instead of her) to the patient (i.e. Nanako). Whether the agent provides benefit to the patient or not is very subjective. Indexicality depends on the subjective judgment of the speaker. By uttering the sentence with the *tekureru* expression, therefore, the speaker subjectively indexes that s/he received benefit from the agent.

In addition, sentences with a *temorau* expression also directly display that the speaker receives benefit from the agent. Tamako in (4), who is a forty-year-old woman with three children, expresses that both her parents-in-law, who lived with her, and her own parents took care of her children. Taking care of the children was the biggest benefit for her as a working mother. Tamako indexes this benefit using the SGR verbs in her narrative during the interview. Chiko is the interviewer here.

- (4) Tamako: *nnn*  
well  
'well'.

*mukoo mo mi temoratta kedoo*  
there also see SRe but  
'They (i.e. the parents-in-law) also took care of my children.'

Chiko: *n n n*  
 yeah yeah yeah  
 ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah.’

Tamako: *maa ryoofoo da na*  
 well both COP PP  
 ‘Well, both of them’

Chiko: *n n*  
 yeah yeah  
 ‘Yeah, yeah.’

Tamako: *mukoo wa bora nooka ga attee*  
 they TOP well farmer NOM have  
 ‘They were farmers.’

Chiko: *n*  
 yeah  
 ‘Yeah.’

Tamako: *ojiichan obaachan shika i nai karaa*  
 grandfather grandmother only be not because  
 ‘Because there were only the grandfather and the grand-  
 mother.’

Chiko: *n n n*  
 yeah yeah yeah  
 ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah.’

Tamako: *kocchi hiibaa ga ita karaa*  
 here great grandmother NOM be because  
 ‘because there was a great-grandmother here.’

Chiko: *a sokea*  
 oh yes  
 ‘Oh, yes.’

Tamako: *hiibaa ga*  
 great grandmother NOM  
 ‘The great grandmother,’

Chiko: *soo nee*  
 yes PP  
 ‘Yes.’



Tamako: *zuutto mi tekureteta tte*  
always see SGi QT  
‘She always took care of (my children).’

Chiko: *baa narubodo*  
Oh right  
‘Oh, right.’

The SGR verbs in this example (4), *mitemoratta*, and *mitekureta*, directly index that the speaker as the patient received benefit (i.e. to take care of her children during her work) from the agent (i.e. her parents-in-law). Although whether the childcare is a benefit or not is a very subjective judgment, in Tamako’s case, it is very beneficial psychologically and economically because she was working and did not have to take care of her infants during her working hours.

In order to clarify my discussion, I embed either the plain form *miru* or the past form *mita* in place of the forms with SGR verbs in the target utterances of Tamako (5a) and (5b). The literal meaning of these sentences is as same as the ones with the SGR verbs. However, (5a) and (5b) lose the indexical meaning of benefit provided to the patient (i.e. the speaker) by the agent. The sentence (5a) actually displays that Tamako’s parents-in-laws voluntarily take care of her children, and Tamako accepts the contribution of the parents-in-laws merely as a fact. Similarly, (5b) provides the impression that Tamako is describing the objective fact that her great grandmother took care of her children. Tamako, in (5b), does not express any benefit from the presence of her great grandmother.

(5a) Tamako: *mukoo mo miru kedoo*  
there also see but  
‘They (i.e. the parents-in-law) also took care of my children.’

(5b) Tamako: *zuutto miteta tte*  
always saw QT  
‘She (i.e. the great grand mother) always took care of (my children).’

The above examples clearly support my hypothesis that these supportive

verbs directly index that the speaker received benefit from the agent.

### 3. 2. Indirect indexicality of the expressions with the SGR verbs in the narratives on childbirth experiences: the persona with two characteristics

Indirect indexicality explains the actual context of the speech. I presuppose that the indirect indexicality of the SGR verbs could express some characteristics of the speaker, such as modesty and servility.

#### 3. 2. 1. The modest persona performed by positive *tekureru/temorau* expressions

As seen above, all of the interviewees used the SGR verbs more than once. Those who used the expressions more than the others share a common feature: their husbands were very busy with their work outside the home.

For instance, Eriko, whose husband was a busy chef and managed several restaurants, used the SGR expressions the most frequently. She used the expressions thirteen times in her forty-three-minute interview. The reason that Eriko frequently employed these SGR verbs could be various. However, one of the biggest reasons derives from her husband's lack of free time. Eriko, a thirty-two-year-old woman with three children, has had "terrible" experiences of childbirth and childcare: she delivered twin girls three years after she had her first daughter. She had to be hospitalized for a long time before delivering the twins. While he has fewer days off than a typical Japanese businessman, her husband took care of her first daughter and the housework. The childcare of the twins was very hard. Although he was not a good caregiver for his first-daughter, her husband played a significant role in taking care of the twins. It is not surprising that Eriko, who received great benefit from her husband's help, frequently used the SGR verbs in order to directly index that she as the patient received benefit. The following example (6) in which Eriko uses the SGR verbs with the adverb *seiippai* "as best he can", emphasizes that she gratefully understand his contribution to the childcare.

At the beginning of (6), Eriko describes that her husband takes care of their twins despite his busy work routine. Eriko emphasized that her hus-

band was busy, compared to other Japanese businessmen. Then, she described that her husband contributed to the childcare as best he could. She used the phrase *seiippai yattekureru* (i.e. taking care of their children as best he could), indicating that her husband provided a big contribution toward the childcare.

(6) Natsumi: *kekoooo isogashii...*

quite busy

‘Is he quite busy (at work)?’

Eriko: *isogashii desu ne tabun bokano*

busy COP: POL PP probably other

‘He is probably busy,’

*futsuuno sarariiman no hito yori waa*

average businessman of person more TOP

‘more than the average Japanese businessman.’

*yasumi toka wa sukunai desu shii*

the day off else TOP less COP: POL and

‘He has few days off.’

Natsumi: *nn*

Yeah

‘Yeah.’

Eriko: *ma asa itte yoru wa sugoi osoi node*

well morning go night TOP very late so

‘Well, because he went to work and came back home very late.’

Natsumi: *nn*

Yeah

‘Yeah.’

Eriko: *kodomotachi no kao wa*

children of face TOP

‘Kids’ faces’

*mi nai desu kedoo*

see NEG COP: POL but

‘He has no chance to see, but’

*demo jibun ga iru aida toka waa*  
 but oneself NOM be during else TOP  
 'But while he is at home,'

Natsumi: *nn*  
*nn*  
 'Yeah.'

Eriko: *tasuke o shitee*  
 help ACC do  
 'he does help'

*n seiippai yat tekureteru to omoi masu*  
 n best do SGi QT think ADD: HON  
 'I think he does his best to take care of the children.'

Eriko used the *tekureru* expression not only to represent the benefit received from her husband but also to display her respect for her husband's contribution, and not to emphasize her own difficulties with childbirth and childcare. Bringing up her busy husband's contribution with the *tekureru* expression, she hides her pains in childbirth and childcare. The attitude expressed here by Eriko is modesty. Modesty is a positive virtue in Japanese society. Therefore, she actually lifts up her personal value expressing her respect to her husband.

For many of the interviewees, the people they declare as beneficial contributors include not only their husbands but also their own parents and in-laws. The thirteen interviewees use the SGR verbs to describe that their own parents and the in-laws helped them out by providing childcare.

In the following examples (7) and (8), Hisako, a thirty-two-year-old woman in the Tokyo sphere,<sup>5</sup> repeatedly describes her mother-in-law's beneficial contribution in taking care of her child by using the SGR verbs. Hisako maintains a good relationship with her mother-in-law, who also lives with her. The mother-in-law helped out with the childcare of her two-year-old son, in place of her busy husband. When her baby turned one, her husband had little time to participate in childcare after work. The first utterance of Hisako in (7) displays that her husband aimed to contribute to the childcare by changing diapers. Hisako's use of the SGR verb *kaetekomashita* (i.e. he changed diapers), and the adverb, *isshookennmee* (i.e. hard) shows that she

received benefit. At the same time, she also states that she received benefit from her mother-in-law. She continued by saying that her mother-in-law had helped to bathe her baby. Hisako described the benefit received from her mother-in-law with an utterance including the SGR verb, *tekureru*, “*obaachan ga tetsudat tekuretarii*” (i.e. Grandmother helped me, and).

- (7) Hisako: *nn soo desu ne*  
well so COP: POL PP  
‘Well, so . . .’  
*maa omutsu no waa*  
well diaper of TOP  
‘Well, diapers . . .’  
*issbookenmee kaete kureteta kedoo*  
doing best change SGi but  
‘He did his best to change diapers, but . . .’

Natsumi: *n*  
*n*  
‘Yeah.’

Hisako: *yasumi no toki*  
a day off of time  
‘when he had a day off.’  
*toka da shii*  
else COP so  
‘so,’  
*ofuro . . .*  
Bathing  
‘Bathing’  
*ofuro wa*  
Bathing TOP  
‘Bathing’  
*mokuyoku no toki waa*  
Bathing of time TOP  
‘When to bathe,’  
*ya reru toki wa yatte kuireteta kedoo*  
do can time TOP do SGi but  
‘He did that when he had time, but’

*sono boka wa daitai watashi de*  
 that else TOP for the most part I COP  
 ‘For the most part I did it on the other days.’

Natsumi: *nn*  
*nn*  
 ‘Yeah.’

Hisako: *nn de ageru no o*  
 well then to dry thing ACC  
 ‘Well, then, when I dried the baby,’  
*obaachan ga tetsudat tekuretari*  
 grandmother NOM help SGi  
 ‘Grandmother helped me do so.’

Natsumi: *aa*  
*oh*  
 ‘Oh.’

Hisako: *nn shite mashita ne*  
 Well do ADD: HON PP  
 ‘Well, she did.’

In example (8), Hisako also uses the supportive giving verb, *tekureru*, in describing the beneficial contribution of her mother-in-law, who often plays with her son. This *tekureru* expression also brings up the mother-in-law’s contribution, and highlights the mother-in-law as a respectful grandmother.

(8) Hisako: *sugoi*  
 very  
 ‘Very’ . . .  
*tonikaku yoku ason dekureru*  
 anyway often play SGi  
 ‘She plays with (my son) often.’

Natsumi: *aa*  
*Oh*  
 ‘Oh.’

Hisako: *nn*  
*yeah*  
 ‘Yeah.’

Natsumi: *ii desu nee*  
 good COP: POL PP  
 ‘It is good, isn’t it?’

Hisako: *hai*  
 yes  
 ‘Yes.’

While she displayed the beneficial contribution of her mother-in-law literally, Hisako also indirectly indexes her modesty as an “ideal” daughter-in-law, who respects the parents-in-law, and submissively defers to the way of the mother-in-law.

### 3. 2. 2. The servile persona performed by negative *tekureru/temorau* expressions

In the narrative discourse of childbirth experiences examined here, while the SGR verbs indirectly index the modest persona of the speaker, in several contexts they also index the servile persona as a “woman or mother”. When the SGR verbs were used in negative forms, they indicated that many of the interviewees hide the feeling that they have had many troubles by having children. Mariko in (9) is fifty-eight years old, lives in the Tokyo sphere, and has three children. Her husband was constantly away on business. One day, when their youngest son was in elementary school, the son had a traffic accident and broke his leg. He was first hospitalized at one hospital, but later moved to a new hospital because there was not enough equipment and staff to take care of his injury in the hospital there. On the day of the transfer, Mariko’s husband was away on business. While remembering this incident, she used the negative form of the SGR verbs, *tekurenai* (i.e. a present form), and *tekurenakatta* (i.e. a past form), to complain of the frequent absence of her husband in serious moments of childcare. At the end of this example (9), Mariko said “*daijina toki ni i tekure nakat kurenai n desu yo* (He is not with us during serious moments)” The negative form of the SGR verbs in this context expresses that she did not receive any benefit from her husband. It indirectly indexes that Mariko was victimized, because she was the only one who had a difficult time in taking care of the children during her husband’s absence.

- (9) Mariko: *shujin gaa i nai shii*  
 husband NOM be not and  
 ‘my husband was not there.’  
*sore de kodomo tsurete atashi kuruma de untensuru*  
 that COP child taka I car by drive  
*n mo taiben da kara*  
 NOM also hard COP because  
 ‘because it is hard that I drive with my child to the  
 other hospital,’

Natsumi: *nn nn*  
 yeah yeah  
 ‘Yeah, yeah.’

Mariko: *soshitara byooin de*  
 then hospital in  
 ‘Then, the hospital’  
*anoo*  
 well  
 ‘Well,’  
*dokutaa kaa o yooishi tekurete*  
 doctor car ACC prepare SGi  
 ‘prepared a car for us’  
*de su . . . su . . .*  
 and su su  
 ‘And’

*so . . . sore ni notte betsuno byooin ni*  
 so that in ride the other hospital to  
*teninshita koto mo*  
 to move the hospital also  
 ‘so, we also moved to the other hospital riding in the  
 car’

*atta n desu kedo mo*  
 was NOM COP: POL but also  
 ‘but,’

*moo*  
 well  
 ‘well,’



*dajjina toki ni i tekure nakat kurenai n desu yo*  
 serious time at be SGi not SGi NOM COP PP  
 ‘He has been not with us in serious moments.’

In my data, there are only five examples of negative forms of the SGR verbs. I suspect it is because the narratives were in an interview event, which is a type of public space (i.e. *omote*) for the interviewees. In this type of formal event, the interviewees perform their formal persona in which people cannot utter their real voice (i.e. *bonne* “on-stage”). Therefore, some interviewees demonstrate a servile persona using the utterances that include the positive SGR and negative terms, such as negative conjunctions and adverbs. Fusako in (10), who married a Buddhist priest, gave birth prematurely, and the baby had to be hospitalized for a long time. She has had both psychological and physical difficulty since childbirth. Because the family she married into maintains a traditional Japanese lifestyle as a Buddhist family, it requires that Fusako manages the housework. While her health condition was not good, however, her mother-in-law helped out. In her narrative, she uses the SGR verbs to perform her modest persona by showing appreciation for the beneficial contribution made by the mother-in-law in helping out with the housework. On the other hand, her utterance, “*iroiro ma ofuro ofuro no sooji toka mo chotto yat tekuretari toka ne* (She (the mother-in-law) helped to do various. Well, like cleaning the bath, she also did slightly),” with the SGR verbs also represents a slightly insulting nuance toward the mother-in-law, because it included the adverb *chotto* (i.e. somewhat), which means “slightly” here. The sentence with the adverb *chotto* indicates that the contribution of the mother-in-law was slight. Fusako’s utterance with the SGR verbs and the adverb *chotto* (i.e. slightly) indirectly indexes both the modest and servile persona, in which she performed as a good daughter-in-law for the traditional family, and as a woman who could not escape the traditional roles of “wife.”

- (10) Fusako: *etto*  
 well  
 ‘Well,’

*iroiro ma ofuro ofuro no sooji toka*  
 various well bath bath LK cleaning like  
 ‘She (the mother-in-law) helped to do various. Well, like  
 cleaning the bath.’

*mo chotto yat tekuretari toka ne*  
 also slightly do SGi like PP  
 ‘she also did slightly.’

As with Fusako, the narratives with the SGR verbs of the interviewees in this study indirectly and intricately index the two relative personas; modest and servile.

#### 4. Discussion: The womanhood or motherhood indexed with the SGR verbs

The present article analyzes the use of the SGR verbs in narratives of women who have experienced childbirth and childcare. I found that SGR verbs directly index the speakers as women who have experienced childbirth and have received various benefits from the agents, such as their husband, in-laws, or their own parents. In order to express the benefit received, the utterances figuratively indicate the “gratitude” toward the agents. Demonstrating the appreciative linguistic attitudes through the use of the SGR verbs, the speakers indirectly index two sides of their persona: the modest and servile personas. The modest persona for the speaker inhabits their front sides (i.e. *omote*), in which the speaker performs their ideal role, such as an ideal wife, daughter-in-law, and daughter, for the agents. The ideal persona admires the contribution of the agents through the speech with the SGR verbs. As modesty is considered as a significant value in Japanese society, in the front stage, the speakers are required to demonstrate this type of persona. Conversely, because the servile persona is in their backstage, it does not often appear in the public space (i.e. *omote*), such as during an interview. The few examples of SGR verbs in negative forms and in positive forms with negative conjunctions and adverbs, indirectly index the speaker’s servility for childcare and housework.

The analysis of the SGR verbs clarifies that the speech of the women who have experienced childbirth and childcare indirectly indexes the com-

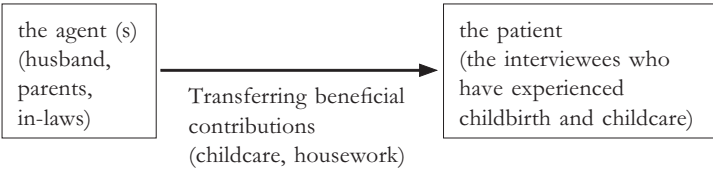
plicated persona of the modest and servile characteristics exhibited by women in Japanese society. Their utterances determine and produce their social roles or status, which can be paraphrased as “married womanhood” and “motherhood.” Their use of the SGR verbs manifests that the women are not satisfied with their social statuses as “married woman,” “wife” and “mother,” understanding the statuses and conducting themselves as the women with the statuses.

5. Conclusion and future studies

The present article aims to represent the relationship between language practices and the sociocultural norms using the concept of indexicality. Although I just focused on the indexicality of SGR verbs here, in my data I found more features that directly and indirectly index the complicated social values concerned with women in Japan. The various levels of speech in the narrative discourse directly and indirectly indicate the social status of women in Japan. Future studies are needed to analyze these various levels of speech in the narrative discourses in the interviews toward the Japanese women who have experienced childbirth and childcare, considering the transition of the social norms over the generations, and the cultural and occupational differences that affect the determination of the sociocultural values.

Notes

1 The relationship between the patient, the agent, and the beneficial contribution is expressed in the following chart:



2 My colleagues and I collected the data from different communities. The first motivation to collect these narratives was that the researchers, who have experienced childbirth and childcare in different communities from their hometowns, found that there were differences in sociocultural norms for childbirth and care in different communities (i.e. both different countries and areas in the same coun-

tries). The interviewees in this study lived in two local areas in Japan at the time they were interviewed: 1) the greater Tokyo area (incl. the Metropolis of Tokyo, Saitama prefecture, Chiba-prefecture, Kanagawa-prefecture), which is an urban area, and 2) Tochigi-prefecture, which is a rural area. Seven interviewees belong to the Tokyo group, and the other eleven participants were in Tochigi-prefecture. We recruited interviewees by word of mouth referring to the ethnographic methodology to collect their “life story”; we asked the participants of the interviews to describe their childbirth experiences, and asked each interviewee to introduce the next interviewee (Sakurai, 2002). This method helped us to find the shared common sense among members of a particular community.

We also considered the differences in generations, and interviewed people from two different generations. The first cohort of interviewees (i.e. ten interviewees) was in their late twenties to early forties, all of whom recently experienced childbirth, and have cared for their children. The second group (i.e. a group of six interviewees), was in their late fifties and early sixties, who were in the mothers’ generations of the first group and had experiences of childbirth and childcare.

3 I did not include the interviewers’ uses of the SGR verbs because I considered that the use by the interviewers might index different information than the ones by the interviewees. This is a possible topic for future research. In addition, there are five SGR verbs in the replies of the interviewees toward the interviewers’ questions with these forms. I included these five uses of the SGR verbs in my analysis because I could not recognize any differences from the other spontaneous utterances of these forms from the ones following the interviews’ forms.

4 All interviewees’ names are pseudonyms.

5 The Tokyo sphere (i.e. *tookyoo keen*) means the geological area that includes the Metropolis of Tokyo, Kanagawa prefecture, Chiba prefecture, and Saitama prefecture.

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## Appendix

### Appendix I

#### Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
ADD	HON addressee honorifics
CAU	causative verbs
COP	copula
LK	linker
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
POL	polite
PP	pragmatic particle
QT	quote
TOP	topic
SGi	supportive giving verbs
SRe	supportive receiving verbs

### Appendix II

#### The information of the research participants

The interviewers

Name	Age	Birth place	Present address	Occupations	Others
Natsumi	37	Tokyo	Tokyo	Part-time instructor	Two children
Chiko	35	Tokyo	Tochigi	Part-time instructor	One child

The interviewees

Anonymity	Age	Birth place	Present address	Present Occupation
Aiko	39	Tokyo	Kanagawa	Part-time instructor
Chieko	61	Tochigi	Tokyo	Housewife
Eriko	32	Tokyo	Tokyo	Housewife
Fusako	39	Hyoogo (Kagoshima)	Tokyo	Housewife
Hisako	32	Tokyo	Saitama	Housewife

Anonymity	Age	Birth place	Present address	Present Occupation
Keiko	63	North Korea (Okayama)	Tokyo	Housewife
Mariko	58	Chiba	Chiba	English teacher
Naoko	31	Kanagawa	Kanagawa	Housewife
Rieko	32	Ishikawa	Tochigi	Housewife
Sachiko	61	Tochigi	Tochigi	Farmer
Tamako	40	Tochigi	Tochigi	Dietitian
Umeko	29	Tochigi	Tochigi	Housewife
Wakako	58	Tochigi	Tochigi	Farmer
Yaeko	31	Kanagawa	Tochigi	A telephone operator of a tour agency
Akiko	61	Tochigi	Tochigi	Housewife
Nanako	29	Tochigi	Tochigi	Housewife
Erika	32	Nagano	Tochigi	Housewife

### Appendix III

#### The list of interview questions

- 1) Please tell your childbirth experiences.
- 2) How did your families (e.g. husband, parents, parents-in-law, siblings, and friends) react to your childbirth?
- 3) How did/do your families conduct in your childbirth and childcare?
- 4) What is the ideal mother for you?
- 5) What do you think that mothers work?